

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Page 1, Line 3, before this line and after the title insert the following paragraph heading:

FIELD AND BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Page 1, Line 26, before this line insert the following paragraph heading:

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Page 2, please replace the three consecutive paragraphs beginning at line 2 with the following three consecutive rewritten paragraphs and paragraph heading:

This object is achieved ~~first and foremost~~ in the case of a rotary-latch lock ~~having the features of claim 1~~, this being based on the provision of a release member which by means of the rotary latch, as the latter rotates into the open position,

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releases the actuating member for the catch for return displacement into the starting position.

~~The subject matters of the rest of the claims~~ Other features are explained hereinbelow with reference to the main subject matter of claim 1, the invention. ~~but may also be important in respect of their independent wording.~~

Such a configuration provides a rotary-latch lock of the type in question which has an increased utility value. During the opening actuation of the rotary-latch lock, which may advantageously be assigned to tailgates of motor vehicles, the actuating member moves from its starting position into the actuating position and, in the latter, pivots the catch into the release position in relation to the rotary latch. The actuating member remains in this actuating position, ~~however, to be precise~~ until such time as the rotary latch has rotated to the extent where it actuates a release member, which allows return displacement of the actuating member into the starting position. This configuration rules out the situation where, in the event of the tailgate being subjected to loading which prevents the rotary latch from rotating into the open position, the opening operation has to be re-initiated. This case may occur, for example, if there is a load of snow acting on the tailgate. The catch can basically be pivoted in the direction of the rotary latch only when the latter has already rotated open to some extent. The situation where the tailgate opens as a result of a catch re-engaging with the rotary latch is thus eliminated. An advantageous development can be seen according to the invention in that the actuating member can be displaced from the starting position into the actuating position counter to the restoring

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force of a spring. There is thus no need for the actuating member to be displaced from the actuating position into the starting position by an electromotive drive since this takes place on account of the restoring force of the spring. The principle according to the invention is realized in a straightforward manner in that the actuating member is an axially displaceable worm which is arranged in a non-rotatable manner on a shaft which is driven in rotation by a motor and has a cross-shaped profile, a protrusion of the release member engaging in the worm helix. With the electromotive drive initiated, the protrusion of the release member causes the actuating member or the worm to be displaced forward into the actuating position, to be precise counter to the restoring force of the spring. If the electromotive drive stops operating following sufficient further displacement of the worm, then the protrusion of the release member retains the worm in the actuating position, in which the catch has released the rotary latch. It is only when the rotary latch is rotated into the open position that the release member is displaced by the rotary latch such that the protrusion leaves the helix of the worm. This allows the spring to take effect, the spring guiding the worm back into its starting position. The operation of opening the tailgate has nevertheless already started then, with the result that the catch cannot move into the active position in relation to the rotary latch. Furthermore, it is provided according to the invention that the spring is a helical compression spring which is seated on the shaft. It is supported, on the one hand, on the lock housing and, on the other hand, on the worm. This makes it possible to realize a space-saving and weight-saving construction of the rotary-latch lock.

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In order to convert the longitudinal displacement of the actuating member into a release displacement of the catch, the actuating member acts on a disengaging section of a catch arrangement. This can take place directly or indirectly. For example, during its axial displacement on the shaft, the actuating member can act on the catch via a lever. It proves to be advantageous if the shaft engages through the fork interior of a fork-like end of the catch, said end forming the disengaging section. This results in the actuating member acting in optimum fashion on the catch. In respect of the control of the worm, it proves to be advantageous if the release member is a lever which can be pivoted about a lock-housing-mounted pin. If this lever is subjected to the action of the rotary latch during the opening rotation of the latter, then the protrusion, at the same time, leaves the worm helix and releases the worm for return displacement into the starting position. The release member performs a double function in that the protrusion is assigned to one lever arm and another lever arm, in particular of the same member, follows the rotary latch, in contact therewith. It is also then advantageous according to the invention to provide a disengaging protrusion which projects radially from the rotary latch and is intended for the other lever arm of the release member. This means that the release member is always released once the rotary latch has covered a defined opening angle of rotation. This reliably prevents the situation where the catch can re-engage, which would make it necessary to re-initiate an opening operation. In order to ensure that the electric motor stops operating following forward displacement of the actuating member, the shaft runs up against a block when the release

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position of the catch is reached. According to the invention, then, it is also provided that the motor remains blocked even when the actuating member has moved back once the rotary-latch lock has been opened. This is achieved by a stop which is assigned in a rotationally fixed manner to the shaft, in particular at the end thereof, and strikes against a mating stop when the release position of the catch is reached. This means that, when the tailgate is open, the electric motor is not driven, and nor, consequently, is the shaft. On the one hand, this results in a low-noise configuration of the rotary-latch lock. On the other hand, the amount of energy required is reduced. According to the invention, it is provided that the stop is a radial protrusion and the mating stop is assigned to the disengaging section. The stop of the shaft is assigned to the worm-like actuating member such that it always moves correctly into the region of the mating stop of the catch, which is forced in the release direction by the actuating member.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Page 7, Line 22, before this line insert the following paragraph heading:

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

delete the paragraph starting on page 14, line 2